

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE  
Governor



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September 11, 2006

Jay Manning, Director  
Department of Ecology  
P.O. Box 47600  
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

Dear  Jay

Based upon the recommendations of the Department of Ecology (DOE) and the Executive Water Emergency Committee, I hereby affirm that the northwestern corner of the Olympic Peninsula is suffering from drought conditions. Pursuant to RCW 43.83B.405(1), I authorize and direct you, as DOE Director, to take the necessary actions, including necessary orders, to formally declare a drought emergency for that area. The specific area that is authorized for a drought declaration is comprised of Water Resource Inventory Areas 19 (Lyre-Hoko) and 20 (Soleduc-Hoh).

Rainfall across much of the state has been abnormally low since mid-June. However, many watersheds in the state appear to have adequate water supplies due to the greater than normal snowpack received in the mountains last winter. The northwestern part of the Olympic Peninsula, especially streams along the Strait of Juan de Fuca, is dependent on rainfall rather than snow melt. Rain has not occurred this summer, so those streams are experiencing extremely low flows. The National Weather Service believes that dry conditions may persist for another month or more.

This problem is most evident today in Neah Bay and the Makah Indian Reservation where the water supply reservoir is nearly empty due to almost no inflow from Educk Creek. The Makah Tribe has instituted strict restrictions on water use and brought two new wells into service, and is working with the federal government to bring in a portable desalination unit. The Tribe is incurring some high costs to take these measures and has asked for assistance from the state and several federal agencies. I understand that DOE has funds remaining from the last drought declaration that could be provided if that area is declared to be in a drought emergency.

I am also concerned that if dry weather persists, other communities and areas of the state as well as fish and wildlife, may become distressed and qualify for a drought declaration. Therefore, I direct DOE to closely monitor weather conditions and effects in cooperation with other state and federal agencies, tribes and water users across the state, and if warranted make further recommendations for declaring additional areas of the state to be in a drought emergency.

Please keep me informed. I want to make sure people have the information and assistance they need to manage water shortages with the least disruption to their lives and the state's economy.

Sincerely,

  
Christine O. Gregoire  
Governor

